

Read for Pleasure

After the Fall

By Dan Santat



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Life begins when you get back up.

My name is Humpty Dumpty.

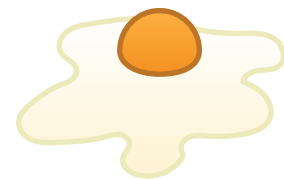
I'm famous for falling off a wall. But that's only half the story, because I decided to get back up.

And when I did, something amazing happened...

Title Talk

The title of this story is: *After the Fall*.

- Recite the nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty:



*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

- But what if this isn't the end of Humpty's story. What if Humpty was taken to hospital, and was put back together again by highly trained doctors? Would the next part of Humpty's story be one worth telling? Discuss.
- Do you think the next part of Humpty's story will end with sadness or happily ever after? Why might this be?

Cover Chat

Now look at the cover of this picture book.

- Where is Humpty sat? How did he get there?
- Why do you think he has climbed up this wall?

Interestingly, Humpty is holding a pair of binoculars and there are many birds flying freely around him. Might this why he climbed the ladder on the back cover, so that he could get a better view?

- Do you think this scene is BEFORE or AFTER Humpty Dumpty's fall? Why do you think this?
- Look at the word THE. How is it depicted. Might this be a clue as to what will happen next? Discuss.

Page 1-2

- Here we see a wall but no Humpty Dumpty. What do you think has just happened?
- Can you spot Humpty's binoculars falling too?

Interestingly, a single blue bird is stood on the wall and is not flying freely in the sky. Might this be significant? Discuss.

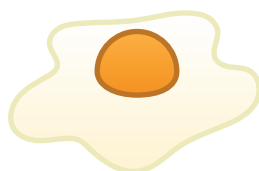
Page 3-4

- Fortunately, the doctors at Kings County Hospital manage to save Humpty and put him back together again. Does this mean that Humpty Dumpty is 100% back to his old self? Why might this be?
- Look at the picture on page 4. Why do you think Humpty wants to sleep on the floor rather than in his bunk bed?
- What do you think is meant when we read the sentence at the foot of page 4?

There were some parts that couldn't be healed with bandages and glue.

- How would Humpty be feeling at this time? Discuss.

Notice that he used to be a famous bird watcher and even won a top prize for doing so. Yet his binoculars are on his desk and it is unlikely that he feels confident enough to ever go bird watching again. Indeed, the only birds he wants to look at now are those he has drawn and stuck on his bedroom wall.



Page 5-6

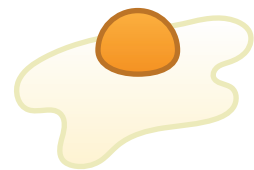
- We see Humpty shopping in a supermarket. The brightest cereal boxes are on the top self, and we presume that these are the brands that Humpty likes best. However, because he is scared of climbing the ladder, he chooses to buy a grey coloured cereal brand instead – grey being a dull, lifeless colour and one we associate with blandness and boredom. Why do you think the cereal boxes get brighter and look (and sound) more fun, the higher up the shelving they sit on? Discuss.
- Does it surprise you to learn that Humpty is afraid of heights? Why not?
- How does this fear prevent him from enjoying his favourite things?
- How does it prevent him from enjoying life itself?

Page 7-8

- What does Humpty think about when he passes the wall that he fell from?
- Despite really missing bird watching, why does he feel he cannot climb the ladder and sit on the wall again? Is he right to feel this way? Discuss.

Page 9-10

- Humpty settles on watching birds from afar. Where does he now prefer to bird watch from? Why might this be?
- *Then one day, an idea flew by.*
Can you spot this idea flying by on page 10?
- What do you think this idea might be? Discuss.



Page 11-12

- What exactly does Humpty try and make?
- Does he find this an easy task to complete? Discuss.
- Look at the fourth and final picture. How many scrunched up pieces of paper can you see?
- What does this tell us about Humpty and his endeavour to make a flying paper bird?

Page 13-14

- Look at Humpty's paper bird. How satisfied would Humpty have felt? Why would this be? Discuss.

Page 15-16

- Follow the flight path of Humpty's paper bird. Notice that, if we follow the dots properly, his paper bird flies both off and back on to this double page spread. On a scale of 1-5, how happy this would have made Humpty feel? Discuss.

Page 17-20

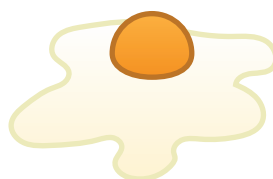
- *unfortunately, accidents happen... They always do.*

How important a sentence is this in terms of A] Humpty Dumpty and B] the reader? Discuss.

- What accident do you think is about to happen to Humpty's paper bird? Where do you think it might land?
- If it does land on top of the very same wall that Humpty fell from, what do you think Humpty will decide to do next: walk away and try to make another paper bird or tackle his fear head on and climb the ladder in order to retrieve it?
- Why do you think he will do this? Discuss

Page 19-20

- How difficult a decision was it for Humpty to climb the wall?
- What does this tell us about Humpty Dumpty's strength of character?
- What did Humpty think about that helped him climb the wall again?
- In light of the fact that he has climbed this wall many times before, how easy a climb for Humpty was this?
- Why do you think he doesn't want to admit that he is terrified? Discuss.



Page 21-22

- What did Humpty do to help him focus on climbing the wall one step at a time?
- Do you think this was a good idea? What might we do when trying to tackle a seemingly unsurmountable task one step at a time?
- Look at Humpty's hands. Why do you think they are shaking? What might this suggest about how fast Humpty was climbing? Discuss.

Page 23-24

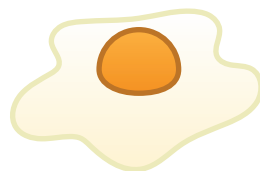
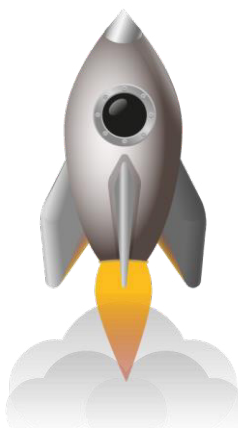
- Eventually, Humpty conquers his fear and stands triumphantly at the top of the colossal wall. Even the birds seem to have gathered to congratulate him and flap their wings with joy. How would Humpty have been feeling at this time? Discuss.
- How big a hurdle has Humpty overcome? Might this be why the majority of this illustration is dominated by the wall rather than Humpty or the birds?

Page 25-26

- Why do you think Humpty wants us to remember him for what he ACHIEVED rather than his accident? Discuss.

Page 27-32

- The remainder of this book has no words. Why do you think the writer chooses to make the telling of the final part of Humpty's story wordless and simply illustrates what happens next? Discuss.



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Roald Dahl